

REASON.

A

POEM.

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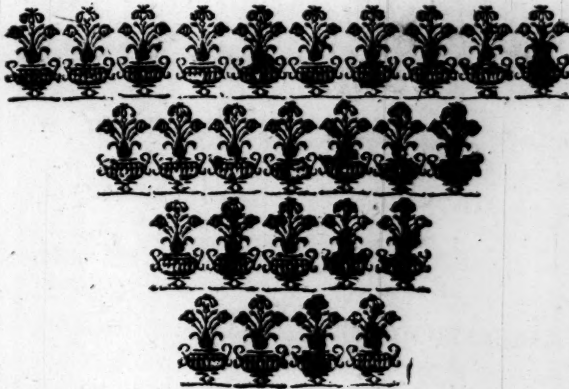
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P O E M.

Written by the Author of the *Choice*.



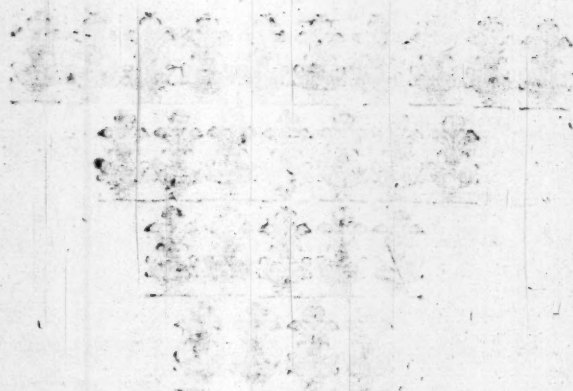
L O N D O N :

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P O E M

Written by the Author of the "P O E M"



L O N D O N

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REASON.

P O E M.

UNHAPPY Man! Who thro' successive Years
 From early Youth to Life's last Childhood Errs ;
 No sooner Born, but proves a Foe to Truth ;
 For Infant *Reason* is o'er power'd in Youth :
 The Cheats of Sense will half our Learning share ;
 And Pre-Conceptions all our Knowledge are.
Reason, 'tis true, shou'd over Sense Preside,
 Correct our Notions, and our Judgment Guide ;
 But false Opinions, rooted in the Mind,
 Hoodwink the Soul, and keep our *Reason* Blind.
Reason's a Taper, which but faintly burns,
 A languid Flame that glows and dyes by Turns ;
 We see't a while, and but a little Way,
 We Travel by its Light as Men by Day.

But quickly Dying, it forsakes us soon,
Like Morning Stars, that never stay till Noon.

The Soul can scarce above the Body rise,
And all we see is with Corporeal Eyes ;
Life now do's scarce one Glimpse of Light display.
We Mourn in Darkness, and despair of Day ;
That Nat'ral Light, once dress'd with Orient Beams,
Is now dimmish'd, and a Twi-light seems,
A Miscellaneous Composition made
Of Night, and Day, of Sunshine, and of Shade.
Thro' an Uncertain *Medium* now we look,
And find *That Falshood which for Truth* we took.
So Rays Projected from the *Eastern* Skyes
Shew the false Day before the Sun can Rise.

That little Knowledge now which Man Obtains,
From outward Objects and from Sense he Gains ;
He, like a wretched Slave, must Plod and Sweat,
By Day must Toil, by Night that Toil Repeat ;
And yet at last what little Fruit he Gains ?
A Beggar's Harvest Glean'd with mighty Pains.

The Passions still Predominant will Rule,
Ungovern'd, Rude, not Bred in *Reason's* School ;

Our Understanding They with Darkneſs fill,
 Cauſe ſtrong Corruptions, and pervert the Will;
 On Theſe the Soul, as on ſome Flowing Tide,
 Muſt ſit, and on the raging Billows Ride,
 Hurry'd away, for how can be withſtood
 Th' Impetuous Torrent of the boiling Blood?
 Begon falſe Hopes, for all our Learning's Vain,
 Can we be free, where Theſe the Rule Maintain?
 Theſe are the Tools of Knowledge which we uſe;
 The Spirits heated will ſtrange Things produce;
 Tell me who e'er the Paſſions cou'd Controul,
 Or from the Body diſengage the Soul;
 Till this is done, our beſt Purſuits are vain
 To conquer Truth and unmix'd Knowledge Gain.
 Thro' all the bulky Volumes of the Dead,
 And thro' thoſe Books that Modern Times have Bred.
 With pain we Travel, as thro' mooriſh Ground,
 Where ſcarce one uſeful Plant is ever found;
 O'rerun with Errors which ſo thick appear,
 Our Search proves vain, no ſpark of Truth is there.

What's all the noiſie Jargon of the Schools,
 But Idle Nonſenſe of laborious Fools,
 Who fetter *Reason* with perplexing Rules.

What

What in *Aquinas* bulky Works are found
 Do's not enlighten *Reason* but Confound
 Who Travels *Scotus* swelling Tomes shall find
 A Clowd of Darkneſs riſing on the Mind.
 In controverted Points can *Reason* ſway ;
 When Paſſion or Conceit ſtill hurries us away :
 Thus his new Notions *Sh—k* wou'd Inſtill,
 And clear the greateſt Myſteries at Will.
 But by unlucky Wit perplex'd them more,
 And made them darker than they were before.
S—th ſoon oppos'd him out of Chriſtian Zeal,
 Shewing how well he cou'd Diſpute and Rail :
 How ſhall we e're diſcover which is Right,
 When Both ſo eagerly maintain the Fight ?
 Each do's the other's Arguments deride,
 Each ha's the Church and Scripture on his ſide.
 The ſharp ill-natur'd Combat's but a Jeſt,
 Both may be VVrong, One perhaps Errs the leaſt :
 How ſhall we know which Articles are True,
 The Old ones of the Church or *B---r's* New.
 In Paths Uncertain, and Unſafe he Treads,
 Who blindly follows other's fertile Heads.
 What ſure, what certain Mark have We to know,
 The Right or VVrong 'twixt *B---fs*, *W---ke* and *H---w*.

VVhat

Shou'd untun'd Nature crave the *Medic Art*,
 What Health can That contentious Tribe Impart?
 Ev'ry Physician writes a diff'rent Bill,
 And Gives no other *Reason* but his Will.
 No longer Boast your Art ye Impious Race,
 Let Wars 'twixt *Alcalies* and *Acids* Cease;
 And Proud G---ll with C---ch be at Peace.
 Gibbons and Ratcliff do but barely Guess,
 To Day they've Good, to Morrow no Success.
 Ev'n G---th and *Maurus* sometimes shall prevail,
 When *Gibson*, Learned *Hannes*, and *Tyson* fail:
 And more than once we've seen the Blundring S---ne
 Missing the Gout by Chance ha's hit the Stone;
 The Patient do's the lucky Error find,
 A Cure he Works, tho' not the Cure Design'd.

Custome, the Worlds great Idol we Adore,
 And knowing This, we seek to know no More;
 What Education did at first receive,
 Our Ripen'd Age confirms us to Believe;
 The Careful Nurse, and Priest is all we Need
 To Learn Opinions and our Country's Creed;
 The Parents Precepts early are Instill'd,
 And spoil the Man while they Instruct the Child.

To what hard Fate is Human Kind betray'd ?
 When thus Implicit Faith's a Vertue made,
 When Education more than Truth prevails,
 And nought is Current but what Custom Seals;
 Thus from the Time we first begin to know,
 We live and Learn, but not the wiser Grow :

We feldome use our Liberty aright,
 Nor Judge of Things by Universal Light ;
 Our Prepossessions and Affections bind
 The Soul in Chains, and Lord it o're the Mind ;
 And if Self-Interest be but in the Case,
 Our unexamin'd Principles may Pass.
 Good Heavens ! That Man shou'd thus himself deceive,
 To Learn on Credit, and on Trust believe ;
 Better the Mind no Notions had retain'd,
 But still a fair Unwritten Blank remain'd ;
 For now, who Truth from Falshood wou'd discern ;
 must first disrobe the Mind, and all Unlearn ;
 Errors contracted in unmindful Youth
 When once Remov'd, will smoothe the Way to Truth ;
 To disposess the Child the Mortal Lives,
 But Death approaches e're the Man Arrives.

Those who wou'd Learning's glorious Kingdom find,
 The dear bought Purchase of the Trading Mind;
 From many Dangers must themselves acquit;
 And more than *Scylla* and *Charibdis* meet;
 Oh! What an Ocean must be Voyag'd o're,
 To Gain a Prospect of the shining Shore;
 Resisting Rocks oppose th' Inquiring Soul,
 And adverse Waves retard it as they Rowl.

Does not that Foolish deference we Pay
 To Men that liv'd long since our Passage stay?
 What odd prepost'rous Paths at first we Tread?
 And Learn to Walk by stumbling on the Dead.
 First We a Blessing from the Grave Implore,
 Worship *Old Urns* and *Monuments* Adore.
 The Rev'rend Sage with vast Esteem We Prize,
 He liv'd long since, and must be wond'rous Wise;
 Thus are we Debtors to the famous Dead
 For all those Errors which their fancies Bred;
 Errors Indeed! for Real Knowledge staid
 With those first Times, nor farther was Convey'd;
 While light Opinions are much Lower brought,
 For on the Waves of Ignorance they Float;
 But solid Truth scarce ever Gains the Shore,
 So soon it sinks and ne're Emerges more.

Suppose

Suppose those many dreadful Dangers past;
 Will Knowledge dawn, and bless the Mind at last?
 Ah! No, 'tis now Environ'd from our Eyes,
 Hides all its Charms and Undiscover'd Lyes.
 Truth*like a single Point escapes the Sight,
 And Claims Intention to perceive it right;
 But what, resembles Truth is soon descried,
 Spread like a Surface and expanded Wide.
 The first Man rarely, very rarely finds
 The tedious Search of long enquiring Minds;
 But yet what's Worse we know not when we Err?
 What Mark do's Truth, what bright distinction bear?
 How do we know that what we know is True,
 How shall we Falshood fly, and Truth pursue;
 Let none then here his certain Knowledge Boast,
 'Tis all but *Probability* at Most;
 This is the easie Purchase of the Mind,
 The *Vulgar's Treasure*, which we soon may find,
 But *Truth* lies Hid, and and e're we can Explore
 The glittering Gem, our Fleeting Life is o're.

F I N I S

